

REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated April 8, 2008. Claims 385, 386, 389, 391 to 393, 401 and 409 remain pending in the application, with Claims 387, 388, 410 and 411 having been canceled herein. Claims 385, 393 and 401 are the independent claims. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Claim 410 was objected to for an informality regarding the status identifier and a correct status identifier for that claim has now been presented herein. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection are respectfully requested.

Claims 385 to 389, 391 to 393, 401, 409 and 411 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 4,839,829 (Freedman). Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are respectfully requested.

The present invention concerns an image forming apparatus determining a charge for charging a user for printout of output information based on whether or not additional information is to be printed out with the output information. According to the claimed invention, the output information is obtained from an information management apparatus, along with first value information indicating a charge value of the output information to be printed out. A selection is made whether or not additional information is to be printed out in addition to the output information, and an output format of the additional information, which is set by a user, is transmitted to the information management apparatus when it is selected to print out the additional information in addition to the output information, wherein the output format of the additional information indicates a position on a sheet of the additional information to be printed out. Then, the

image forming apparatus receives, from the information management apparatus, second value information indicating a charge value of the additional information based on the output format of the additional information, which varies based on the output format. A charge amount for the printout of the output information to be printed out together with the additional information is then determined by discounting the second value information from the first value information, when it is selected to print out the additional information in addition to the output information to be printed out. Alternatively, a charge amount for the printout of the output information is determined based on the first value information without discounting the second value information when it is not selected to print out the additional information in addition to the output information. The additional information is then printed out together with the output information according to the output format of the additional information, which is automatically-selected and transmitted by the information management apparatus when it is selected to print out the additional information in addition to the output information, where the additional information to be printed out is automatically-selected based on the number of times that additional information has been printed out and a predetermined maximum limit count associated with the additional information.

With specific reference to the claims, amended independent Claim 385 is directed to an image forming apparatus for charging a user for printout of output information, the apparatus comprising a memory storing a computer program, and a processor that executes the computer program, the computer program comprising the steps of obtaining, from an information management apparatus through a network, output information to be printed out and first value information indicating a charge value of the

output information to be printed out, wherein the output information is selected from a plurality of output information registered in the information management apparatus based on a user designation, selecting whether or not additional information is to be printed out in addition to the output information to be printed out, transmitting, to the information management apparatus through the network, an output format of the additional information which is set by a user, wherein the output format of the additional information indicates a position on a sheet of the additional information to be printed out, when it is selected in the selecting step to print out the additional information in addition to the output information to be printed out, receiving, from the information management apparatus through the network, second value information indicating a charge value of the additional information, which varies based on the output format of the additional information, determining a charge amount for the printout of the output information to be printed out together with the additional information by discounting the second value information from the first value information, when it is selected in the selecting step to print out the additional information in addition to the output information to be printed out, or determining a charge amount for the printout of the output information based on the first value information without discounting based on the second value information, when it is not selected in the selecting step to print out the additional information, outputting the charge amount determined by the determining step so as to display the charge amount for the printout on a display, and printing out the additional information together with the output information according to the output format of the additional information, which is automatically-selected and transmitted by the information management apparatus, when it is selected in the selecting step to print out the additional information in addition to the output information to be

printed out, wherein the additional information to be printed out at the printing out step is automatically-selected based on the number of times that additional information has been printed out at the printing out step and a predetermined maximum limit count associated with the additional information.

Claims 393 and 401 are method and computer medium claims, respectively, that substantially correspond to Claim 385.

The applied art of Reilly is not seen to disclose or to suggest the features of independent Claims 385, 393 and 401, and in particular, is not seen to disclose or to suggest at least the features of an image forming apparatus i) determining a charge amount for a printout of output information to be printed out together with additional information by discounting second value information, which is received from an information management apparatus and which indicates a charge value of the additional information and varies based on an output format of the additional information, from first value information, which is obtained from the information management apparatus and which indicates a charge value of the output information to be printed out, when it is selected to print out the additional information in addition to the output information to be printed out, or determining a charge amount for the printout of the output information based on the first value information without discounting based on the second value information, when it is not selected to print out the additional information, and printing out the additional information together with the output information according to the output format of the additional information, which is automatically-selected and transmitted by the information management apparatus, when it is selected to print out the additional information in addition to the output information to be printed out, wherein the additional information to

be printed out is automatically-selected based on the number of times that additional information has been printed out and a predetermined maximum limit count associated with the additional information.

Freedman discloses that a first terminal transmits a print parameter to a second terminal 36 via a program computer 20 and also discloses that the second terminal transmits charge information to the first terminal via the program computer. In addition, Freedman discloses in column 10 to print information with additional information, such as an advertisement, being inserted therein and to calculate a print charge in accordance with the parameter of the print function. In this connection, it should be noted that Freedman merely teaches that the additional information (e.g., advertisement) is inserted into a halfway or the last page of the information to be printed and thus fails to teach the “output format of the additional information”, which indicates a position on a sheet thereof and is transmitted to an information management apparatus to obtain charge value information of the additional information. Freedman, therefore, does not disclose or suggest determining a printout charge amount of output information to be printed together with selected additional information, by discounting second value information varying based on an output format of the additional information, indicating a position on a sheet thereof, from first value information of the output information, as clearly recite in the amended independent claim 385. Further, Freedman is silent on how the additional information to be inserted is selected and therefore does not disclose or suggest selecting the additional information on the basis of the number of times the additional information has been printed out and a predetermined maximum limit count associated with the additional information, also as clearly recited in the amended independent claim 385.

In view of the foregoing deficiencies of Freedman in light of the amended claims, independent Claims 385, 393 and 401, as well as the claims dependent therefrom, are believed to be allowable.

No other matters having been raised, the entire application is believed to be in condition for allowance and such action is respectfully requested at the Examiner's earliest convenience.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, California office by telephone at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our address given below.

Respectfully submitted,

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